

Chapter **14** Section 4 Abolition and Women's Rights

## Geography Application

**King Cotton**

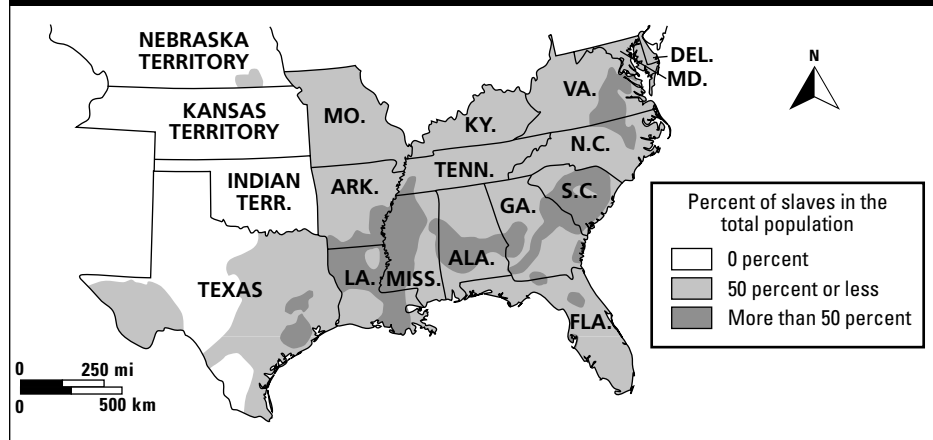
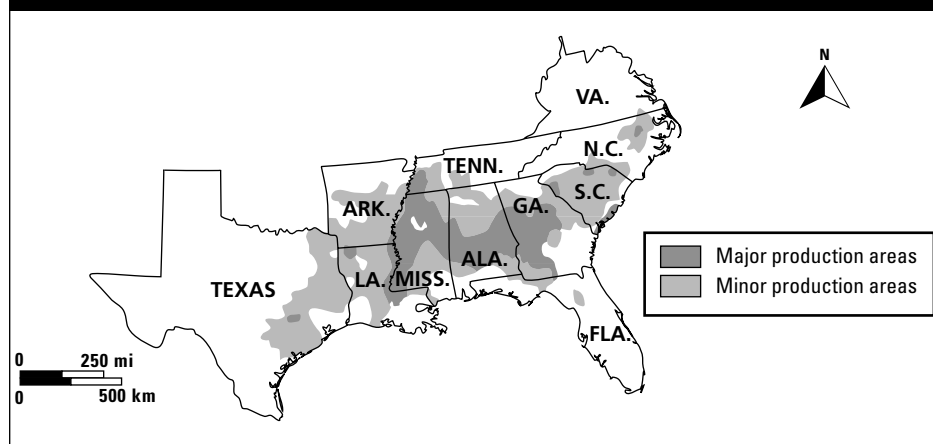
“Cotton is King!” was a familiar phrase in the Old South of the 1800s. This comes from the fact that the crop once ruled the economy of the region.

Since Jamestown in 1607, cotton has been grown in the South. It first became a major cash crop in the 1700s. Soon inventions such as the spinning jenny and the cotton gin made production of cotton into textiles quicker and easier.

But the picking of cotton was a drawback into the 1800s. Harvesting could not be done by machines at the time. (Even more than a hundred years later, in

1960, one-fourth of the U.S. cotton crop was still picked by hand.) So larger farmers of cotton came to rely on the labor of African-American slaves. As a result, cotton cultivation shaped the lives of Southerners, from white plantation-owning families to the slaves who worked the fields.

Eventually, cotton production pushed westward to Mississippi, Louisiana, and even Texas. By 1860, just prior to the Civil War, the United States was producing more than two million pounds of cotton a year. The maps below compare density of slave population to areas of cotton production.

**Distribution of Slave Population, 1860****Areas of Cotton Production, 1860**

**Interpreting Maps and Text**

1. In which direction did cotton production move across the South as it became more widespread in the 1800s?

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2. In which region of Texas was cotton produced?

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3. How far north was cotton grown in 1860?

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4. What was the drawback to the creation of cotton products in the 1800s?

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5. Outside of Virginia, which six Southern states had the largest areas in which slaves made up more than 50 percent of the population?

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6. Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware all had slaves. Yet those states do not appear on the cotton-production map. Explain what this means.

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7. In terms of slave population and cotton production, what was unique about Virginia?

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